



**United States Attorney's Office
District of Columbia**

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NEWS RELEASE

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Former U.S. Foreign Service Officer and International Jeweler Plead Guilty to Illegal Gratuities and Supplementation of Salary Charges

Washington, D.C. - A former U.S. Foreign Service Officer, Michael John O'Keefe, Sr., 61, and an International Jeweler, Sunil Agrawal, 49, pleaded guilty today before the Honorable Paul L. Friedman to related illegal gratuity and supplementation of salary charges, announced U.S. Attorney Jeffrey A. Taylor.

O'Keefe, a 22-year veteran of the State Department, was employed at the U.S. Consulate in Toronto, Canada, as the Deputy Non-Immigrant Visa Chief. He pleaded guilty to one count of accepting an illegal gratuity, which carries the potential penalty of not more than two years of imprisonment and a fine of not more than \$250,000. O'Keefe will be sentenced on June 19, 2009.

Agrawal, who is the Chief Executive Officer of STS Jewels, Inc., an international manufacturer and distributor of semi-precious gems with offices in New York and worldwide, pleaded guilty to one count of supplementing the salary of O'Keefe, which carries the potential penalty of not more than one year of imprisonment and a fine of \$100,000, which Agrawal has agreed to pay. Agrawal will be sentenced on May 29, 2009.

According to the Statement of Offense, to which O'Keefe agreed, before February 1, 2004, and continuing through August 18, 2006, O'Keefe received and accepted from Agrawal round trip airline tickets between Toronto, Canada and Las Vegas for O'Keefe and three companions; hotel accommodations and expenses in New York for O'Keefe and two of the companions; and hotel accommodations and expenses in Las Vegas for O'Keefe and three companions; jewelry, expensive meals, and entertainment. O'Keefe scheduled expedited interviews for and issued visas to 21 persons sponsored by STS Jewels.

Agrawal admitted today in a separate Statement of Offense, filed with the court, that he provided the above listed items as supplementation of O'Keefe's salary.

“The acceptance of favors and gratuities by government officials for simply doing their job undermines the trust placed in our government to provide fair and honest services to the public” stated U.S. Attorney Taylor. “There is simply no place in our system of government for such conduct.”

In announcing the guilty pleas, U.S. Attorney Taylor praised the work of Diplomatic Security Service Special Agents, especially Special Agents Calvin Sherstan, Jeffrey Ford, Blake Hayes, Kendall Beels, John Wilbur, and Margalit Murray; the Consular Officers of the Bureau of Consular Affairs; staff at the U.S. Consulate in Toronto; and the Vulnerabilities and Assessment Unit, the Computer Investigations and Forensics Branch, and the Visa and Passport Analysis Unit, all of the Department of State. He also commended IT Specialist Joseph Calvarese, Paralegal Nadia Arnett Snoddy and the entire National Security Section Support Staff as well as Assistant U.S. Attorneys Brenda J. Johnson and Denise Cheung of the National Security Section, who are prosecuting the case.

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